

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

AGENDA ITEM No. 1

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE	Subject: COURT AND BAIL SERVICES	
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 28 AUGUST 2003	Ref: JD/SD/LG	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. To advise Committee of, and seek approval for the proposals for the future management and delivery of Court and Bail services across the Sheriff Courts in Lanarkshire which are located within the Sheriffdom of South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway.
- 1.2. The proposal reflects the recommendations of the Joint Best Value Review on Court Services (conducted with South Lanarkshire), and the Inspection of Court Social Work Services by the Social Work Services Inspectorate. Both these reports have previously been reported to Committee.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. As part of the National Objectives and Standards for Social Work Service in the Justice System, Local Authority Social Work services are funded to provide a range of services to Courts. These services include presenting advice, information and reports to Courts, and advice and information to offenders.
- 2.2. Traditionally, Court Services have been provided on a discrete basis to each of the three Sheriff Courts in the area, Airdrie, Hamilton and Lanark.
- 2.3. The Best Value Review of Court Services jointly carried out by North and South Lanarkshire, indicated that the present service did not offer sufficient flexibility to meet the demands of the Court, and posed particular problems during periods of leave and sickness to provide adequate cover to the Court.
- 2.4. The review recommended that Court and Bail Services be reconfigured and form one integrated service across both Authorities managed by one authority. It was proposed that South Lanarkshire manage this single integrated service.
- 2.5. The plan to integrate Court and Bail Services across both Authorities reflects the objectives of "A Tough Option" namely making the most effective use of resources across Groupings. It also underlines the Grouping's commitment to working together and develop joint services as outlined in the Joint Lanarkshire Plan for Criminal Justice Social Work Services.
- 2.6. This proposal has been discussed and accepted at the Lanarkshire Joint Criminal Justice Forum chaired by the Convenor of Social Work from North Lanarkshire in June 2003.

2.7. SACRO currently provide a Bail Supervision service to Hamilton Sheriff Court, and the intention is to extend this to other Courts.

3. PROPOSALS / CONSIDERATIONS

3.1. To establish one team which will provide a service to the 3 Lanarkshire Sheriff Courts within the Sheriffdom of South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway, ie, Airdrie, Hamilton and Lanark Sheriff Courts.

3.2. The proposals include:

- One line management structure
- Expansion of the Supervision Scheme to Airdrie Sheriff Court
- Integration of the tasks of Bail Officer and Court Social Worker
- The requirement that Court based Social Workers undertake Mental Health Officer training
- The requirement that Social Work Assistants have experience or training in substance misuse

3.3. All staff will have a primary office base but will be expected to cover other locations as and when required, ensuring cover is provided during annual leave or sickness absence.

3.4. The implementation of these proposals will allow a more consistent and flexible service approach across all three Courts, and allow the development of Bail services to Airdrie Sheriff Court.

4. FINANCIAL/PERSONNEL/LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are 2 members of social work staff who will be affected by these proposals, 1 Senior Social Worker Grade PO2/5 and 1 Social Worker Grade QSW.

4.2 The Senior Social Worker at Airdrie Sheriff Court has expressed a wish to remain in North Lanarkshire and does not wish to be considered for the new post of manager within the integrated service managed by South Lanarkshire. The post holder will therefore be subject to redeployment.

4.3 The social worker at Airdrie Sheriff Court, wished to remain part of the Court Team. This can be accommodated and the worker will transfer to South Lanarkshire. This will offer a degree of familiarity and consistency to Airdrie Sheriff Court during and after the transition.

4.4 Consultation with members of staff have been carried out with the full involvement of the trade union.

4.5 The proposals have been discussed in depth with the Sheriffs, Scottish Court Service and the Procurators Fiscal who are in agreement with the new service.

4.6 The costs of the reconfiguration of services contained within these proposals will be met from the specific grant funding from the Scottish Executive.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Committee is asked to:

- (i) Agree the establishment of one integrated Lanarkshire Court Team offering service to the three Lanarkshire Courts and managed by Social Work Resources in South Lanarkshire.
- (ii) Note the staffing and service developments outlined in paragraph 3.2 of the report
- (iii) Remit the report to the Policy and Resources (Personnel) sub committee
- (iv) Otherwise note the contents of the report



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Director of Social Work
23 July 2003

*For further information on this report please contact Jim Scullion, Service Manager, Justice Services
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